





# OUR CROP MARKETS.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE MANITOBA HISTORICAL & SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY BY COL. SCOBLE.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :—

What are we to do with our surplus production? We have in Manitoba and the Northwest Territory, a cultivable area sufficient to produce food for millions—where are the millions who require thus to be supplied?

This is the great problem to be solved, so far as the future of this country is concerned. Of what use are teeming harvests, and multiplying flocks and herds, unless we can market them profitably? We have an unsurpassed agricultural country to work, and from its soil our riches must come, if riches are to be our portion. Unless, therefore, we can profitably cultivate our lands, and advantageously raise cattle, sheep and swine, we can do no more than earn a bare subsistence. This question presents itself dimly to many, and distinctly and definitely to the few, causing moments of great uneasiness and doubt as to the future. To assist in dissipating these gloomy fancies, I propose to give, in this paper, such facts and figures as have convinced my own mind of the unreasonableness of such doubts, and the unnecessary nature for such uneasiness. And that I may not burden your minds with figures, I shall in the body of the paper, give only my deductions from statistics consulted, embodying the figures in detail in an appendix.

The question naturally arises,

WHENCE WILL COME THE DEMAND that will tax to its uttermost capacity the resources of this country? The world is now supplied without our future of over-production! Granted,—but the population to be fed is ever increasing, while the area of production is annually becoming more restricted. The area of new land taken into cultivation is

not in ratio to the increasing demands of increasing population, while the older cultivated lands are annually decreasing in their productiveness. "To these two causes combined, the increase of population, and increase of consuming power per head, coupled with a comparatively stationary agriculture; Europe owes the unique phenomenon of large masses of population supported by imports from foreign and distant countries." (Giffen, *World Crowding*) Great Britain and in varying degree France, Germany, Holland and Italy have already overstepped in population the limits of their food producing power, and depend for their existence, on the importation of food from abroad. Every country in Europe—even Russia—has become too small for its people; not a few of them are actually inadequate for the sustenance of their inhabitants—the domestic food supply is insufficient, and all of them too small of themselves to supply their people with the scale of comfortable existence, which, has become a common or well nigh universal expectation. The nations of Europe have entirely ceased to be self-sufficing. (Europe in Straits, Blackwood, 1882.) The working classes are no longer satisfied with the meager food of their forefathers, but demand their shares of the luxuries of life. Especially, so is this the case where their bread is concerned. Germany, Sweden, Norway and Russia have only lately become wheat-consuming nations. Until a late date they exported nearly all their wheat, and consumed the inferior grains. Now, however, white bread is no longer a luxury, but a necessity in these countries, and their export of wheat is annually lessening, while their imports increase.



Of all European countries, Great Britain is the most dependent upon a foreign food supply. With a population of 35,000,000, the British Islands have only the capacity of supplying food for about one-half its people. Taking the Agricultural Statistics for the harvest of 1884 (Times, Oct. 24, 1884) we find that with a total home production of 9,504,000 quarters available for consumption after deducting seed, (Great Britain requires an importation of 16½ millions quarters of wheat (132,000,000 bushels) to supply her people until next harvest.

"In stating the ensuing year's total requirements at 26,000,000 quarters, when the total available for consumption has averaged 27,795,000 quarters during the nine years ended 1883-4, and the average for the last six years has been 25,723,000 quarters, we take into consideration, not only the increase of population, and the encouragement to extra consumption furnished in the excessively low price of bread and flour, but also the fact that a larger proportion than usual of the home produce of wheat will be withheld from market and appropriated as feed for animals. According to statistics, the average of 18 years, 1866 to 1883, shows 10½ million quarters annual production of wheat and 12½ million quarters imported; amounting to a total of 23,311,000 quarters per annum available for consumption. For the first nine years the home growth was 12,278,000 quarters, and the importation 9,548,000 quarters per year. For the last nine years ended 1883-4, the home crop gave only 9,182,000 quarters, while the imports swelled to 15,613,000 quarters per year."—Times, Oct. 24, 1884.

But wheat is not the only article in demand. From the agricultural returns of Great Britain for 1884 we find that in 1884 there were imported:

	Strg.
471,792 live cattle .....	valued at £ 9,322,212
1,116,115 " sheep .....	2,518,382
38,863 " pigs .....	133,130
6,050,158 cwt. dead meat .....	16,251,961
1,295,754 " fish .....	2,301,966
941,436,160 " eggs .....	2,732,055
873,511 " lard .....	2,217,016
2,331,173 " butter .....	11,773,933
1,799,703 " cheese .....	1,890,100
Poultry and game .....	591,895
64,138,631 cwt wheat .....	31,421,181
16,329,312 " do flour .....	12,311,778
Other grains .....	23,329,559
Other meals .....	193,519
Rice, sago, etc. ....	1,181,081
Sugar and molasses .....	2,097,311
Malt .....	1,665
Hops .....	1,089,216
Fruit .....	3,639,266
Nuts .....	687,381

Vegetables..... 2,426,498

Or a total of all classes amounting to..... £157,520,797

These articles came approximately from the following countries:

	Breadstuffs— including grain, flour, potatoes & rice, et cetera.	Meat stuffs— live & dead bacon, butter, cheese, etc.
France and Belgium.....	3.2	0.5
Russia and Sweden.....	17.0	0.2
Germany, Denmark and Holland .....	15.0	2.1
Spain and Portugal.....		0.16
Austro-Hungary.....	1.1	
Turkey, Egypt and Roumania .....	7.8	—
United States .....	75.7	8.0
South America .....	1.1	—
Canada .....	10.0	0.5
India and Burmah.....	9.6	—
Australia.....	1.8	—
China and Siam.....	1.1	—

Nor is this demand stationary. These importations have increased since the year 1864 from £58,658,034 sterling, progressively and steadily, until they have reached the present figure: while the increase in the value of these importations per head of the population has grown from £2 1s. 3d. sterling in 1871, to £3 5s. 7d. sterling in 1883, showing that the demand has arisen, not only from the increase of population, but from an improvement in the style of life of the people. That these demands will be equally progressive in the future there can be no reason to doubt: that they will increase in greater ratio there is every reason to believe. An article in the British Quarterly Magazine (Oct. 1883) on the "State and Prospects of English Agriculture," the scope of which was, amongst other subjects, "to enquire into the extent to which British agriculture was affected by foreign competition, and how far that influence was likely to be permanent," states that, "In the meantime we compete against the virgin soils of America, and our exhausted fields must be manured at a cost of 20 per cent. of the value of our crop of wheat. With an exhausted soil and heavy expenses for manure and labor we contend that it no longer paid to produce even in at by artificial means, except under favorable circumstances." "The higher you farm, beyond a certain limit, the less is the amount of increase you obtain for a given amount of manure, and therefore the greater cost of that increase." The Times of October 24th remarks as follows:—



"And in powerful illustration of the position of farmers at the close of what everyone deemed a propitious season and favorable time of harvesting, we cannot do better than transcribe the latest intelligence which reaches us from agriculturists in different quarters of England. Indeed, such distressful terms constitute the tenor of almost all farming correspondence at the present moment. The burden of these lamentations is the preposterous price to which corn has descended, with little prospect indeed of recovery to a reasonable level; the fact that corn still remains a product of husbandry which cannot, at present, be displaced; while the alternative of more live stock production is met also by a fall in the price—store beasts being worth 30s to 40s per head less than at this time last year, and sheep at the great fairs making 8s to 12s per head lower value."

And quotes in particular a correspondent from East Suffolk, who says:

"Prospects have never in our memory been so bad. We know of no substitute for wheat; and consequently, most of us are preparing to sow nearly the usual breadth again, with the full knowledge that it will lose money, but in the belief that any other possible crop would lose more. Notices to quit have come in this Michaelmas thicker than ever, and the outlook of landlords is, if possible, more desperate than that of tenants. Many of our most sober-minded men believe that the cultivation of a great deal of our poor land will have to be abandoned, and that on good farms more permanent pasture will have to be introduced."

Following up the subject, in a leading article in the Daily Times of October 25th, 1884, the writer remarks:

"Notwithstanding the fine season and the sanguine view taken by many of farming prospects, the actual return is not upon the whole up to the average. Wheat, indeed, is reckoned as rather above the average, but we have to remember that the average itself has been lowered by a succession of unfavorable seasons, and that the selling price is excessively low. The average was formerly taken at 29½ bushels per acre, but the eighteen years from 1866 give an average of only 26½ bushels, and the last nine years of the term give a return of only 25½. We are all accustomed to the grumbling of farmers, but the figures now put forward show that they are not crying out for nothing. The conjunction

of small crops with unprecedentedly low prices is a thing which every one can appreciate. Their distress tells upon the labor market in two ways. In the first place, they are turning to a mode of farming which calls for the minimum of labor, and, in the second, the reduced quantity which they do employ is likely to be more poorly paid. In prosperous times men go to the towns with the certainty of finding the wages which the country no longer yields. But at present times are not prosperous even in the towns. There are large numbers of workmen out of employment, and as the winter advances it is to be feared that the demand for labor will still further fall off. Without in the least wishing to prejudice the party questions now being somewhat hotly debated, we may point out that the economic conditions of the moment are unfavorable for refusing popular demands or stirring up popular discontent. Political questions, which attract little attention when people are busy and comfortable, are apt to be made the outlet for the bitterness and impatience naturally engendered by idleness and want. It is the first duty of all men concerned in politics to bear in mind the quantity of inflammable material produced by straitened circumstances, and to display a more than common amount of caution and circumspection."

The agricultural returns for 1884, as presented to Parliament, show the following details: The total extent of land returned in 1884 as under cultivation of all kinds of crops, bare fallow and grass, amounted—for Great Britain, to 32,465,861 acres; for Ireland, to 15,242,837 acres, exclusive of heath and mountain pasture land, and of woods and plantations. It is an increase of 173,703 acres over last year. As regards corn crops there is an area returned under wheat of 2,750,588 acres, an increase of about 47,000 acres over last year. It should be noticed, however, that the area of 1883 was the smallest recorded since the returns were first obtained in 1866, and the present year's crop has been grown on nearly a million fewer acres than that of ten years ago. It should be noticed that the 94,802 acres under wheat in Ireland last year have sunk this year to 69,008. The acreage of barley, 2,346,041 acres, shows a decrease of more than 140,000 acres, and for the United Kingdom is the smallest number recorded since 1868. Oats, 4,276,866 acres, have decreased

mark on original



nearly 100,000 acres. Taking all the figures as to corn crops in Great Britain, we find the total area to be 10,113,264 acres, a decrease of 213,254 acres since last year.

The total acreage of green crops, under which head are included potatoes, turnips, swedes, cabbage, vetches, lucerne, mangold, was in the United Kingdom 4,733,860 acres, a slight increase from 1883. Sugar beet, which comes under this heading, is returned as occupying 812 acres, mostly in Suffolk.

Hops show, with 69,259 acres, a slight increase. Clover and grasses in rotation covered 6,392,402 and permanent pasture 25,667,206 acres.

It is interesting to know that there are 610 silos in Great Britain, of a total capacity of 1,861,744 cubic feet. Norfolk is the county where the ensilage of fodder is most practised, the number being 59, with a total capacity of 142,403 cubic feet. There are two silos in Ireland.

As to the various kinds of live stock in the United Kingdom the facts especially noteworthy are a large increase in cattle and sheep and a decrease in pigs. Of horned cattle the number is 10,422,762, or 325,069 more than in 1883. These are the largest aggregate numbers of cattle recorded since the returns were obtained. The total number of sheep and lambs is 29,376,787, which is more than the number of last year by over a million. Pigs have decreased in number from 3,986,427 to 3,906,205. Horses have increased by about 6,000 to 1,904,515. —Times, Dec. 13th.

The Mark Lane Express of December states that there is a further reduction in fall wheat sowing in England, amounting to about ten per cent. of the area sown in 1884. That there is a growing disposition to forsake the cultivation of cereals may be seen from the statistics of permanent pasturage, which has grown from 11,233,000 acres in 1879 to 12,198,000 acres in 1884, an increase of 964,000 acres in five years. Writers in the agricultural journals and leading monthlies are continually advocating changes that indicate that the cultivation of wheat is neither prosperous nor profitable under its present conditions. Thus, I think we may argue that Great Britain is likely to be for the future as great a wheat buyer as in the past. Let us turn from Great Britain to the other large European countries. France, which in the past has largely exported to

Great Britain, is now in its turn a purchaser of wheat. France is the largest wheat consuming country in the world, and next to the United States the largest wheat producing country. M. Dabost, professor of the agricultural college at Gregina estimates the average annual consumption of wheat in France of 116,000,000 hectolitres, equal to 319,000,000 bushels. Her production in 1883 was 285,321,992 bushels of wheat and spelt, leaving an apparent deficiency of 33,678,008 bushels. In 1884 the Bulletin des Hailes estimates the wheat crop at 292,289,573 bushels leaving an apparent deficiency of 26,710,427 bushels. The importation of grain and flour has risen from 519,707,000 kilogrammes (614,597 tons) in 1872 to 1,985,005,000 kilogrammes (2,729,382 tons) in 1882, and farmers have grown so dissatisfied with the prices to which foreign competition has reduced them that

The committee of the French Chamber of Deputies charged with the duty of examining the proposals for increasing the duties on imported grain has reported in favor of raising the import duty on wheat from 60c to 2f 40c, and that on flour from 1f 20c to 7f per 100 kilogrammes. The additions recommended are not so great as those demanded by the Protectionists, who have been asking for duties of 5f on wheat and 9f on flour; but, under the circumstances, it is astonishing that any body of responsible politicians should have been found ready to advocate such a Corn Law at all.

In view of the above facts we may justly assume that France has withdrawn from the list of producers, and ranks as a consumer of wheat.

We cannot, however, apply the rule of increasing population to France. It is singular in this respect, its population having been almost stationary for many years. In the year 1861 the total population (by the census) was 37,386,313. In 1881 its population was 37,321,186. Similarly, its cultivated area exhibits little or no change; the acreage sown in cereals being 37,092,331 acres in 1879 and 37,050,371 acres in 1882.

With Germany the case is altogether different. During the twenty years during which France has been at a standstill in population, that of Germany has increased from 35,871,640 in 1861 to 45,234,061 in December, 1880. The acreage under cereals has slightly decreased, as has the production of those crops — the





importation of grain and flour has increased from 39,900,000 centners (about equivalent to the same number of hundredweights) in 1873 to 47,667,000 in 1882; while the exportation of the same articles has decreased from 29,980,000 centners in 1873 to 12,154,000 centners in 1882. In one respect alone does Germany resemble France, which is that in spite of increasing demands for food, the domestic supply is not increasing, and Germany must, therefore, purchase ever increasing supplies from abroad.

THE MOST ASTONISHING AND SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

are drawn from Russia, but a few years back styled "the granary of Europe." Her production of wheat shrank from 225,849,000 bushels in 1870 to 101,101,830 bushels in 1883, while her population increased from 74,145,223 in 1870 to 83,659,351 in 1880. Until lately Russia has been largely in the condition of a new country with vast quantities of land over which a growing agricultural population could spread. Now the European area is more or less filled up, and unless the vast territories of Siberia can be largely utilized for settlement, the pressure of population on the means of subsistence in Russia may soon become very great. The soil may be capable of supporting with better agriculture, a larger population; but this is not the point. The kind of agriculture possible in any country is related to the existing capacity of the population, or to such improvements in that capacity as are in progress; and with the Russian population as it is, there are certainly traces in Russia of an increasing severity in the struggle for existence, which may at any moment become most serious.

The ominous fact remains that population is increasing faster than food production, and that in 1879, actual famine prevailed over extensive provinces of that empire. It is significant to note that the quantity of wheat (grain and flour) exported from Russia to Great Britain shrank from 17,938,977 cwts. in 1872 to 9,679,941 cwts. in 1882, although the demand for those products in Great Britain had more than doubled in that time.

As it is with the principal countries mentioned, so it is with the less important ones. Italy's production of wheat has decreased steadily since 1874, and the acreage has so declined that from 5,000, to 8,000,000 bushels of foreign wheat

will be required every year. For this year the shortage is estimated at nearly 8,000,000 bushels. The population of Italy increased from 21,777,334 in 1861 to 28,459,628 in 1871, while the average under crop has been stationary.

Time will not admit of my making further reference to the statistics of Europe, which, however, appear in tabulated form in the appendix. I must turn my attention nearer home, to

OUR GREAT RIVAL

in food-producing power—the United States. Since 1872 the exportation of wheat has grown from 26,423,000 bushels to 95,272,000 bushels in 1882, while the exportation of flour in the same period has increased from 2,514,000 barrels to 5,916,000 barrels. Within the same time her population increased some twelve millions. Now the period must arrive when the United States will be, in relation to the production of food and the increase of population, in the same position as the countries of Europe. Every twenty-five years of the past century the population of the United States has doubled itself. If we apply the same rule to the future, in twenty years from now the population of the United States will be 100,000,000. What will be the influence of such an increase upon its exports of food? Taking the average crop of wheat at 500,000,000 bushels per annum, (which is rather above than below the actual figures) every bushel would be required for home consumption. But this is assuming that the area of production does not increase in ratio with the increase of population, and I do not think that it can. A much larger portion of the available area of the United States has been taken up for settlement than is commonly imagined. The land surface of the United States, exclusive of Alaska, is given in the last census as 2,970,000 square miles. Of this area, according to the same authority, 1,569,000 square miles have been taken for settlement, the balance being 1,401,000 square miles. This unoccupied area is chiefly in the west, large portions of which are unfit for agriculture. Mr. Porter, one of the Tariff Commission, in his book on the west, estimates that only 140,000 square miles will ever be available for cultivation. Robert Giffen, President of the London Statistical Society, in his essay on "World-Crowding" (to which I am largely indebted for the inspiration of this paper) estimates



that "Altogether an addition of about 20,000,000 to 25,000,000 to the rural population of the United States, would seem all that is required to occupy the available area in the same way that the oldest and most settled part is now occupied." He reasons out from actual statistics the proposition that in 1890 "not only will the second group (central, western and southern) of States very probably be filled up to the level of the thirteen original States, but the work of filling up the last group of all (Far West and Pacific States and Territories) will have advanced towards completion." In another ten years, that is, by 1890 the limitation of area in the United States will be felt. There will be no longer vast tracts of virgin land for the settler. The whole available area will be peopled agriculturally as the Eastern States are now peopled. Considering the superior fertility of many tracts within the United States, it may be argued that, as in the case of France, the United States can support a population per square mile three or four times larger than that of the older States. But the figure of 35 per square mile, as the usual population of the older parts of the United States is, after all, one fourth of the agricultural population of France per square mile, and there are important differences between the populations of France and of the United States. The consuming power of the United States population is perhaps double that of France, so that the soil cannot possibly support the same number of Americans as French. We must not come to the subject with European ideas as to the scale of living.

As regards the production of wheat in the United States, it is a fact beyond dispute that the wheat area is already contracting. In the Southern States it has reduced thirty per cent within the last five years; in the Middle States twenty per cent; and in the Western States ten per cent within the same space of time. This reduction is partially due to low prices, and to the increasing desire to adopt what is known as "mixed farming;" but largely to the exhaustion of the land for wheat production. Continuous cropping has so reduced the productive power of what was once the best wheat land in the Eastern and Middle States, that it is now impossible to raise that grain, and

THE WHEAT PRODUCING AREA  
is being forced west and north until it

has reached our southern boundary. Beyond a trifling extension to the westward it can go no farther. It is fairly safe, therefore, to assume that the wheat raising capacity of the United States will not increase in ratio with the increase of population, and that before many years have passed, the United States will in its turn become an importer of wheat. That this is no idle speculation is proved by the instance that the breadstuffs required for seed and home consumption in the United States in 1882 exceeded the quantity required in 1878 by 342,483,139 bushels, while total value of breadstuffs exported remained about the same, or in actual figures \$181,778,000 in 1878 and \$182,670,000 in 1882.

#### WHAT ABOUT OUR RIVALS

in the East, India and Australasia? The former is the bugaboo that has been held before us from time to time as newspapers lacked matter to fill their space. But there is nothing in the facts to justify apprehension of successful competition. The trade in wheat between India and Europe commenced in 1873, when the export duty ceased, and its progress has been astonishing, as the following figures show:

AMOUNT AND VALUE OF INDIAN WHEAT EXPORTED:		
		Valued at
1878	6,373,168 cwts.	£2,873,765
1879	1,056,720 "	520,138
1880	2,201,515 "	1,121,267
1881	7,411,375 "	3,277,912
1882	19,901,005 "	8,869,562
1883	20,961,060 "	8,880,000

The imports into Great Britain increased from 1,941 cwts. in 1869 to 11,248,988 cwts. in 1883. The average shipments to Great Britain for the past three years has been about 18,000,000 bushels per annum. France and Belgium have also been large importers.

According to an estimate recently made by the Indian Government, as the result of an investigation undertaken at the request of the home authorities, the area under wheat in British India is about 20,000,000 acres, and that in native territory at about 6,000,000 acres, and the total yield is about 220,000,000 bushels yearly. India was able to export in 1881 2 over 37,000,000 bushels, of which nearly one-half went to Great Britain. The exports of wheat, however, fell off about one-fourth in the year 1882-3.

The question of most interest in regard to Indian wheat production is, of course, the important one to what extent that production and the consequent export is



likely to be increased by the extension of railway accommodations and by improvements in cultivation resulting from better systems of irrigation, etc. Upon this question no very confident conclusion appears to be entertained by those regarded as best qualified to express an opinion.

Consequently, the Imperial Government appointed a select committee of the House of Commons "to enquire into and report upon the necessity for more rapid extension of railway communication in India, and the means by which this object may be best accomplished, with special reference to the report of the Famine Commissioners, and with due regard to the financial condition of India." This committee has recently concluded its labors and reported in favor of a rapid extension of railway communication, laying stress upon the remarkable growth of wheat export.

The railway scheme of the Indian Government contains thirty projects, many of them in course of execution, amounting in the aggregate to 3,896 miles, and all declared to be urgently required either for protection against famine or for other important purposes. The estimated cost is 28 millions and a quarter, of which it is proposed that 13½ millions shall be borrowed by the Government, two millions by companies under modified guarantee, and twelve millions by companies taking their own risks. There is another schedule, containing 3,432 miles of railway, all of which, though desirable, is regarded as so certain to be remunerative that it may be left entirely to private enterprise. Thus the financial question is really narrowed to the best method of providing what is still required of the sum of thirteen millions for lines which must be made by the Government or not at all. — Times, Dec 9.

In all probability this recommendation will be carried into effect, and 13½ millions of pounds sterling misplaced. I say misplaced advisedly, for if these railways are intended as a stimulus to wheat production, to supply the deficiencies of Great Britain, the sum could much more advantageously have been expended in developing this country. First, because of the

#### IMPENDING STARVATION OF INDIA.

Owing to the growth of its population under British rule, India has now a population of about 170 to the square mile. It appears from the most careful research

that there is very little new and fertile soil to appropriate, that the old land shows signs of exhaustion, and that the limits of production have been approximately reached. On the other hand the increase in population proves to be nearly one per cent per annum. In ten years, therefore, there will be 20,000,000 more people in India to feed. The impossibility of imposing an improved system of agriculture upon an unprogressive and prejudiced people, precludes the hope of increased productibility of the soil. Whence then are the increasing millions to be fed? Certainly India cannot long produce a surplus over their own requirements. The creation of a famine fund, by means of which millions of the Indian people are semi-pauperized, is a present indication of the imminent evil.

Secondly—We can produce better wheat at about the same cost—the low price of Indian labor being set off, in our case, by the better yield of our land, the improved machinery and more advanced system of cultivation. Indian wheat has a slight 'beany' flavor. The superior quality of the wheat of Manitoba is due partially to the soil, but chiefly to the amount of

#### SOLAR LIGHT

enjoyed in a country where the day is two hours longer in the height of summer than it is even in Ontario. We are told that 37 per cent. of the land in the Punjab was in wheat in 1877-8, and that the average yield was 13 bushels per acre, with necessary irrigation to assist its production. According to our crop reports for last year our average was 21.80 bushels per acre, and this year 22.31 bushels per acre.

Thirdly—When the Hudson's Bay railway and steamship line is in operation we shall be about 10,000 miles nearer Liverpool than India—a fact that should count for something in the eyes of importers.

Upon similar grounds I would dismiss from possible competition the wheat of Australasia. The average yield of wheat per acre in South Australia for fourteen years is 7½ bushels, and the Commissioner of Agriculture for that colony predicts that India will supplant Australia in European markets.

So little is known in Great Britain about our natural resources, that in a leading article in the Times, heretofore quoted, the possibility of obtaining food



supply from this country is not even mentioned. The writer says":

"Our foreign food supply unhappily becomes a matter of greater importance every year. We are almost as deeply interested in the harvests of the uttermost parts of the earth as in our own. Since the United Kingdom is no longer self-supporting, the next best thing is that the empire should be able to supply its own wants. India is rapidly becoming one of the greatest wheat-growing countries of the world. From statistics recently compiled by the Government of India it appears that the area under wheat in the Punjab, the north western provinces, Bombay and the central provinces is this year about nineteen million acres, and that the estimated yield is twenty-four and a half million quarters. Adding an estimate for the districts from which reports have not yet been received, it seems probable that the total production will be over thirty million quarters, of which, in a season favorable to the other crops upon which the natives depend, at least one-fifth can be spared for export. The quality of the grains exceedingly high; indeed, when crushed between steel rollers, as is now the approved system, instead of ground between millstones, it yields to none. In certain qualities required for the production of bread to the English taste it is somewhat deficient, but the defect can fortunately be corrected by an admixture of English wheat. Our Australian colonies also produce wheat of high character, and the production appears to be increasing, upon the whole, although not in each separate colony. The supplies of fresh meat from these colonies are steadily growing, although they do not of course rival the quantities sent us across the Atlantic. But taking our various possessions together, it seems probable that in a very short time they will be in a position to supply us with all that we require of the necessities of life, though for its luxuries we shall still, with our present habits, have a heavy bill to pay to the world at large."

It would probably astonish the writer if he were informed that in Manitoba and the Northwest there exists probably 200,000,000 acres of fertile wheat growing land. That with an agricultural population in Manitoba of less than 100,000, we are able, within three years from the first occupation of the land, to export, as

the product of 309,281 acres, after providing for home consumption and seed,

NOT LESS THAN 5,000,000 BUSHEL.

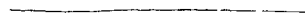
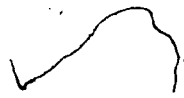
Let us apply this actual average production to six million acres of our waste lands, and we should have 130,000,000 bushels, or enough to supply all the requirements of Great Britain, and all that is necessary to ensure this supply is that assistance shall be given us to develop our resources. Curiously enough, the British public, while fostering India and assisting to build up the United States—two-thirds of the capital invested in American railways comes from Great Britain—looks with distrust and jealousy upon any colonial scheme. Witness the difficulty, almost amounting to impossibility, of obtaining the necessary money to construct the Canadian Pacific and other local railways.

I have taken up your time to little purpose if I have not made clear two things. First, there is very little chance of over-production of food so long as the ratio of increase in population is greater than the ratio of increase in cultivation.

Second, that our great rivals in production in the past are gradually, yet surely, becoming consumers instead of producers; and that in comparatively few years we must become the first wheat exporting country in the world. Possibly, when our resources fail, Africa will take our place.

I will now pass to another feature in the consideration of the subject—in the absolute dependence of Great Britain upon its foreign food supply, and the effect that it would have upon us if Great Britain were at war with any of the great powers. I have already shown you that Great Britain requires from abroad this year about double the quantity of grain and flour that has been raised in that country during the past season, and that half a million head of cattle, a million sheep and six million hundredweights of dead meat were imported last year for the subsistence of the people. What would be the effect upon that country were these supplies suddenly to be cut off? The writer of an article entitled "Our Food Supplies in Wartime," Blackwood's Magazine, July 1882, thus sums up the situation: "When two diplomatists meet to discuss some burning question of international difficulty, the one who represents a nation that has enough and to spare of food from its own fields, has the advantage of the other who represents a





people who are buying a great part of their daily bread from a third nation, if not from the very nation he is arguing with. Besieged cities sometimes suffer from lack of food, never from want of cotton shirts or knives and forks.

During the progress of a war what a weapon we are thus putting into our enemy's hands. If he dare not meet our war ships in open conflict, he can lie in wait for the bread ships of Great Britain traversing the sea from all quarters, and even if he do not capture many of them, he will drive a large portion of our merchant ships off the ocean, and turn the carrying trade over to neutral bottoms. If our enemy is at the same time one of our great food suppliers he may stop his quota of the supply altogether at some critical period of the war. Again, what influence and authority would be given to neutral nations which supply us with large portions of our food requirements. How careful must our diplomatic conduct be to them, and how great our deference to their opinions. Without violating his neutrality he might put such difficulties in the way of food traffic as would be virtually assisting our adversary.

Lastly, how would the question affect the tone of our own population, as the war went on, or even before it began? If a dispute trembled in the balance between ourselves and the United States, the usual protests of the economists against war in general would find a ready echo in the feelings of every one who knew that a considerable rise in the prices of bread and meal would be the first result, and however successful our arms, there would rise up before the responsible minister the silent sufferings of thousands of poor and hungry, swelling the constant cry of the opponents of the war against the continuance of such sacrifices. Could it be expected that a minister would, under such pressure, consider with due firmness proposals affording immediate relief at the cost of some future national advantage."

The conclusions the writer draws are:

1st. That we cannot expect in the future to provide from home resources more than one than one half of the ordinary food required by our population.

2nd. That depending as we do now on three or four foreign states for the most of that extraneous half, is putting an enormous political power into their hands, which will control our independence.

3rd. That we could secure the full amount we may require in all time to come from our own colonies, by submitting to an increase in the price, not greater than what occasionally occurs at the present time by the fluctuations of the harvest, by means of differential duties on food supplies in favor of our colonies.

It is to this latter conclusion that I would draw your attention. Great Britain has manifestly reached a critical stage, wherein its commercial supremacy is becoming endangered, partly owing to the growing jealousy and rivalry of other nations in manufacturing industry, and partly from the operation of their hostile tariffs. Add to this the agricultural depression—the solution of which seems to be a hopeless problem—the difficulties of governing antagonistic classes—and the sum of difficulty is reached. Why should not Great Britain revive Pitts' grand scheme of a

BRITISH CONFEDERATION OR ZOELVEREIN, and establish a commercial league with her colonies? Sir R. W. Rawson, president of the London Statistical Society, recently in a lecture on British and foreign colonies, stated that although the system of free trade opened the markets of the whole world to the colonies, yet nearly one-half their trade (46.3 per cent.) was carried on with the mother country,—and that

"While during the 11 years 1872-83 the foreign import trade of England had increased 9 per cent., its colonial import trade had increased 15.4 per cent., and while its foreign export trade had increased only 4.6 per cent., its colonial export trade had increased 20 (19.9) per cent., or more than four-fold that of the foreign trade, the percentage proportions of the increase in the two grades being respectively 71 and 332 per cent."

Why not consolidate and combine these interests? Why should not Great Britain help to build up her colonial possessions, by buying their surplus production? Why not pave the way to obtain these supplies by developing the resources of the colonies? India is not a colony, — it is a dependency peopled by hostile races, governed by aliens, and which may at any time be wrested from that rule—yet Great Britain can afford to spend 13½ millions of pounds sterling, and to suggest that individual enterprise should furnish fifteen more millions of pounds sterling



to render more easy the task of feeding the people of India, when periodical famines occur. A vast region which has been so often the prey of famine must have an immense capacity for home consumption, increasing steadily with the growth of that wealth and prosperity which all the efforts of statesmanship are combining with social causes to promote, and as the resources of India increase, it seems not unlikely that the improved means of transit will facilitate the supply of wheat to her own markets rather than to those of England.

What would be the effect of the expenditure of

£28,000,000

in developing the resources of Manitoba and the Northwest? The speculation is too vast for one to indulge in—I must leave it to your individual imagination.

But I cannot refrain from mentioning one means of development, that, to my mind, stands first in importance. I allude to the route to the markets of Europe via Hudson's Bay and Straits. With this route open the centre of our vast fertile area would be as close to Liverpool as the present grain emporium of the United States—Chicago! Our ports on Hudson's Bay—Fort Churchill or York Harbor, and nearer to Liverpool than Montreal or New York! The only question is as to the practicability of the route, and to set at rest any doubt that may linger as to that question. I cannot do better than quote the words of the historian of this season's exploring expedition, Mr. C. R. Tuttle. He says:—

“Now, as to the navigation of

HUDSON'S BAY AND STRAIT.

there seems to be still some difference of opinion. However, all agree that the navigation season is long enough for the purposes of commerce to warrant the construction of a railway. I have been over the route, and have had all the opportunities of judging of its character that others have had, and I say that the only months in the year in which navigation will be obstructed in Hudson strait are July and August. The route is open and free every other month. Of course the ice met with in July and August can be easily penetrated by steamers. There are certain months of winter when the temperature in that region is probably too low for nautical operations, but there will be found to be not less than eight months navigation of the Hudson's Bay route—navigation free from all kinds of danger

and far superior in every way to that of the St. Lawrence.”

“Such I believe to be the possibilities of the navigation of Hudson's Strait—a volume of water connecting the great North American inter-ocean with the Atlantic—that is destined to become a commercial highway far outstripping the fog-bound Strait of Belle Isle, and surpassed only by the widely-famed English Channel. Indeed, Captain Sopp, of the Neptune, was one day heard to remark, in the presence of the members of the expedition, ‘I would sooner navigate Hudson's Strait than the English Channel.’”

“By the Hudson's Bay route, if it were opened, immigrants could be landed in the Northwest from Europe at an expense of less than twenty dollars a head, and hundreds of thousands would reach these prairies when one thousand reaches them now. The route would not only ensure us a vast immigration but would be the best guarantee of prosperity to the immigrant, for by it he would receive all necessary supplies from the best European markets at a much less cost of transportation than at present, and by it, he would send his surplus products to Liverpool direct at less than one half the present rate. With the Hudson's Bay route opened, tea, sugar and such like necessities would be much cheaper in Manitoba than at present, and wheat and beef, the great staple exports, would be worth at least thirty per cent. more than they are to-day. In short the Northwest would be one of the cheapest countries on the continent to live in and its products would be worth the most.”

One tithe of the sum that it is proposed to expend upon Indian railways would build a railway from Winnipeg to Churchill, and would open to Great Britain the vast food producing area of the Northwest. From thence in peace or war time her dependent millions could be fed, for no foreign foe could cut her off from her base of supplies. The eastern entrance to Hudson's Straits could be as easily closed as the Straits of Dardanelles close the entrance to the Black Sea; and a fortified harbor on the south coast of Greenland would afford a refuge to shipping, even if an enemy's fleet evaded the vigilance of her cruisers. With the distance thus divided by three, such a line of supply could be surely and sufficiently protected



from all European fleets. When it is considered also that coal exists in large quantities on Hudsons Bay and the rivers which empty into it, and that timber, iron and copper ore, petroleum, and a vast range of materials of economic value are to be found upon its shores ; it will be difficult to conceive that any hesitation should be felt as to the immediate necessity for opening up and developing such inestimable advantages as are presented in this scheme. Yet such is the apathy with which the development of this country is considered, that it is doubtful if any political economist in Great Britain would advocate, and more than doubtful if capitalists would advance

the money for such an undertaking as is presented in the opening up to commerce of this great northern highway.

The principal authorities consulted in the preparation of this paper are 'World-crowding,' by Robert Giffin. 'Europe in Straits,' and 'Our Food Supply in War Time,' from Blackwood's Magazine. The agricultural statistics of Great Britain, the United States and Canada for 1883-1884. 'The State and Progress of British Agriculture,' from the British Quarterly Magazine. 'India, her Wheat and her Railways' from the nineteenth century, the statistical abstract of the English Board of Trade from 1872 to 1882, etc.

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